

St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell



Friends of St Edmund's Newsletter: August 2021

A Message from our Chair, Julian Stedman:

First of all I would like to thank all those who were able to join us for the AGM when we were privileged to hear Patrick Daniell's inspirational presentation on his visit to Ethiopia. At the meeting I reported that the PCC had recently agreed to go ahead with "Eco-Church" an initiative to secure a more sustainable and climate-friendly use of resources. I am pleased that Kerry Andrews has provided more information on this worthy project in this Newsletter. The Church is considering how to make a small contribution to reducing our carbon footprint and promote living more sustainably. There will be opportunities for the Friends to help support this work with small financial contributions to the projects and by offering to help in participating in working parties in the church yard.



You will be aware that Kaye Bennett, who has provided a solid support to the Friends as Treasurer and Membership Secretary since the Friends was inaugurated, has stepped down from this role. I was able to thank her for her wholehearted contribution to the work of the Friends. We also remembered Roger Austin for his support and wished him and his wife well following their move to Scotland. We welcome Katy Jones to join the Trustees; and my wife, Alison, has agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. However, we are still looking for someone to join the Friends' Trustees Committee as Treasurer. We would be delighted to hear from you if you only have limited experience of managing a simple budget.

News from Eric Gower: Friends will be interested to know that at 7:30pm on Wednesday 24th November 2021 I will be speaking to the Crickhowell and District History Society. My subject is 'The Story of the Sweetland Organ at St Edmund's Church'. I have discovered some interesting facts about the organ which was built in 1882. My talk will focus on the people involved in commissioning, designing, building and paying for the instrument which is still used on a regular basis. Everyone is welcome to join us. It is planned that the meeting will take place in the Church. "



Treasurer's Update from Kaye Bennett: We are very grateful to have received a significant sum of money in memory of a Friend who has recently died. This has made a substantial difference to our bank balance which currently stands at £5,058.54. This will increase by the end of August.

Friends News from Alison Stedman: I take this opportunity to introduce myself as a new Trustee of the Friends of St Edmund's and also the Membership Secretary. Sincere thanks go to Kaye for being a Friends Trustee from the foundation of this group. Her record keeping and administration will be a hard act to follow. We shall miss her commitment to this role and I say a big 'Thank You' on behalf of everyone for Kaye's magnificent contribution to the work of the Friends.

It is encouraging to report three new memberships, including one from a man who visited the church during the morning 'opening' times when lockdown regulations were sufficiently relaxed to allow visitors. Although not a local man, his ancestry is recorded by St Edmund's Church, and goes back to the 12th century. I hope to be able to further increase the list of members, although at this stage that means being innovative in raising awareness as the groundwork has already been done by the Trustees.



As a prelude to the AGM on 6th July we were treated to an excellent zoom presentation on Ethiopia by Patrick Daniell, now living back in Winchester. He spent a month in the country, guided by several Ethiopians who authentically shared the landscape and traditions of which Patrick learned much. Having recently visited Ethiopia with Tearfund, he had already given me a preview of his wonderful photographs. He was keen to share his experiences yet did not wish a presentation to be of 'just' holiday photos. He had carried out much research into the country, which made up the first part of his presentation. The event was well attended and appreciated, thank you, Patrick.

We shall continue to offer free membership to newlywed couples for the first year after their wedding in the church. After that couples are invited to continue their membership. The same offer is made to families following baptisms.

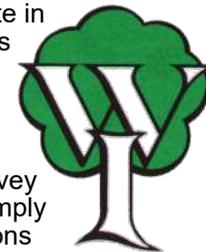
The Trustees invite you to suggest topics for interesting talks and ways of attracting new members. We are custodians of a beautiful church that has played a part in the lives of many in the town and beyond. Let us encourage our community to share with us our love and interest in St Edmund's Church.

Fundraising at St Edmund's: Kathryn Bullon:

Sadly, due to Covid Restrictions we have not been able to have our **August Open Days** again this year. We all really miss the opportunity not only to fund-raise but also to have a time for fellowship and outreach. We love meeting with not only church members but also with lots of visitors (and their dogs). We hope that next year we will be able to enjoy the 'Saturdays in August in church serving tea/coffee and homemade cakes' again.



Now for some better news! In the 1960s The Women's Institute in Crickhowell paid for lighting to be installed in the church grounds to allow the church steeple to be illuminated in the hours of darkness. It could be seen on most of the approaches to the town and was a visual reminder of the presence of the church. Sadly, the lights haven't been working for several years but the PCC are keen to have it restored. We have had some initial survey work done and the whole system will have to be replaced to comply with current legislation and to take account of the Brecon Beacons dark skies policy. The system will be on a timer, similar to the church clock chimes, so it would only be lit at nightfall and would be turned off at 10pm. Let's hope we will be able to start the process of making it happen very soon.



Church matters: Update on our Church Building: Adrian Andrews

In the Spring, repairs at the base of the Spire and top of the Tower were carried out. These included re-securing lead flashing's behind the Parapet and re-pointing the Parapet Copings, and fitting stainless steel mesh guards to the gutter outlets to the spouts to prevent blockages. The battens supporting the shingles were refixed and a number of shingles replaced.

Internally, the Conservation of the Effigies was carefully completed. Please note the date of Sally Strachey's talk about this work. In the coming months it is hoped we will have in place a method of monitoring the ongoing movement in the East Gable and South Wall. Repairs were carried out about fifteen years ago and previous repairs are visible internally. It will take some time and expense to diagnose the causes and determine the best method of arresting any further movement.

The Quinquennial inspection Report recommended refurbishment of the West Porch. The roof tiles are in poor condition and the lead flashing abutment with the Copings on the outer walls. The doors also need a suitable treatment. This would be a limited area of work where a visible result could be achieved if sufficient funds can be raised.



Another New Initiative for our Church: Eco Church Group - led by Kerry Andrews, (our Young People's Leader)

During 2020, Alison Stedman and I discovered that we were both looking into environmental issues and attending online webinars about Climate Change and Eco Church, and thought we should do something and let the church know about it too.

In October 2020, I wrote an article for the Ministry Area Magazine called "How green is my church?" I mentioned about the Eco Church scheme set up by 'A Rocha' which has produced a "free online survey and supporting resources, designed to equip your church to express your care for God's world in your worship and teaching; in how you look after your buildings and land; in how you engage with your local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of your congregations."

Then in November 2020 I made a proposal to the PCC that we make use of the Eco Church survey to establish our current carbon footprint and engage with the resources provided to help us to become 'greener'. It was accepted. In Feb/ March, when Alison and I did the survey, we found, to our surprise that a reasonable number of eco-friendly actions had already been taken. I then presented this to the PCC who agreed that we should set up the **St Edmund's Eco Church Group**. We then invited anyone who attends church, and members of the 'Friends of St Edmund's' to form a group. **Eight people offered to join.**

We have met 4 times and looked at each of the 5 sections in the survey in more detail to see what else we could do. The 5 sections are:

- 1) Worship and teaching,
- 2) Buildings,
- 3) Land,
- 4) Community and Global Engagement
- 5) Lifestyle.



It took a while to work out the church's carbon footprint (the annual emissions before lockdown were 21.70tCO₂) and a few other technical details. There were also a few actions which we realised we could take with little effort and cost, such as exchanging cleaning products with eco-friendly ones, adopting the polythene recycling which our young people started before Easter and setting up an extra website: St Edmund's Eco Church Project crickhowellparish.org.uk)

There is also a link to it from the church's main website.

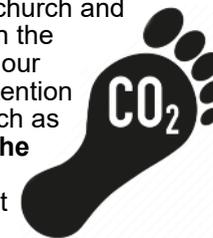
A sub-group to look at the land management was also set up in May. We heard about a campaign called 'No mow May' which encourages people to let their lawns grow for a few weeks to allow wild flowers and grasses to flourish, which in turn encourage insects, butterflies and bees to proliferate, which helps birds to feed their young. A few patches had already been left un-mown while the primroses were blooming. We decided to let these few areas continue growing so that the young people and children could take part in activities of wildflower identification and insect exploration activities during the national '**Churches Count on Nature week' from 5th to 13th June**. We did this in consultation with Anthony Silwood and our gardener.



We were also offered a free wildflower and grasses survey by a professional from 'Caring for God's Acre' which runs a scheme at the moment in partnership with Natural Resources Wales for churches to be part of the 'Biodiversity Hotspots Across Wales Project'. They are encouraging churches to manage their churchyards in a way which increases the number and variety of flowers and grasses and which will then improve the wildlife too. They run courses and offer advice. We will soon be making a plan together with our gardener for the coming years so that it continues to look tidy yet thrives with biodiversity.

We recently updated the original survey and submitted it as we have reached the **ECO bronze award level**. Now we're reviewing each section and planning what we can do to reach the **ECO silver award level** by this time next year.

Part of the ethos of Eco Church, is not only to reduce our own church and individual lives carbon footprint', but also to encourage others in the community to take global warming seriously by taking action in our local area and also further afield. In order to bring this to the attention of the public, **Eco Church** together with other organisations such as **Tearfund and Christian Aid**, suggest that churches '**Declare the Climate Emergency**' and show their commitment, by reducing their carbon footprint to zero by 2030. In the news during recent months, we are seeing a heightened awareness of **global warming** which is causing disasters affecting many countries around the world, and the injustice, frequently, of the poorest communities being hit the hardest by the damage caused by the richest countries.



We therefore considered that St Edmund's Church should take a stand together with our Rector Rev. Rana Khan, and accordingly we have organised two important events.

- 1) On Wednesday 1st Sept at 7:30pm, we will be holding a Webinar to which we have invited two guest speakers. **Ayub Khan** will start the evening by sharing facts and figures, and a young person's perspective of the Climate Emergency. Then, **Dr Julia Edwards**, Climate Change Champion for the Church in Wales, will speak about her new role, and past experiences of helping climate-affected communities in the Pacific. Finally, **Rev Marcus Zipperlen**, a member of the 'Church Action for Sustaining the Environment Group' in Wales will talk about why communities, churches and individuals should reduce their carbon footprint and how it can be achieved. There will be time for questions and answers after the presentations which we anticipate will generate lively discussion about this serious issue. A Zoom link will be available nearer the date.



We would like to invite you to join us for the Webinar, and also on the following **Sunday, 5th September**, when we will hold a **Climate Sunday Service at 10:30am in St Edmund's Church**. There will be new, inspiring songs, members of the Youth Club will be taking part and **Rev Marcus Zipperlen will be the guest speaker**.

If any of the Friends are interested and would like to join the ECO Group or get involved in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me: **kerryadrian555@hotmail.com or 07976 737665**.

Thank you, Kerry Andrews

A Message from our Rector, Rev. Rana Khan: Dear Friends of St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell, you may, or may not be worshipping members of St Edmund's Church, but you have shown committed friendship to this historical, living church which has supported and maintained the sense of community in Crickhowell for many centuries. I thank God that He knows all that we need before we even realise it ourselves. He has made us stronger by surrounding us with the Friends of St Edmund's Church. I wish you every success for all you do during these unprecedented and challenging times to keep the flame burning.

Revd Rana Khan Rector of St Edmund's Church Crickhowell

Dates for your Diary:

October 12th: Tuesday at 7.00pm: Sally Strachey, Conservator of Historic Buildings, Monuments and Sculpture, will be talking to us about her fascinating work as a Conservator.

November 24th Tuesday at 7:30pm: Eric Gower will be talking to Crickhowell and District History Society about 'The Story of the Sweetland Organ at St Edmund's Church.

You can find out more information about happenings and other events at St Edmund's. on our website www.crickhowellparish.org.uk, or email our membership secretary,

Alison Stedman, alisonstedman@btinternet.com

